

We Were Promised Jetpacks

Sometimes you have to go back to basics in order to find yourself again. This is something Scottish rock band We Were Promised Jetpacks realized over the course of creating their fourth full-length album, *The More I Sleep The Less I Dream*.

After the musicians finished touring 2014's *Unravelling*, they decamped home to Scotland and took a breath. They reverted to their original four members and dealt with several behind the scenes changes. They celebrated a few marriages and tried to remember who they were when not on the road. A decision was made. No more touring until a new album had been written.

It wasn't until early 2018 that they finally felt they had a collection of songs they were proud of. But only after taking a few wrong turns along the way.

"The first batch of songs were written for the wrong reason," Mike says. "We put a lot of pressure on ourselves and ended up writing a certain kind of song. Focusing more on choruses and structure, trying to simplify everything."

"We scrapped probably a full album," Adam adds. "Something just felt off about them. They didn't work at all." So, they regrouped. Instead of focusing on external expectations, they decided to write for themselves. To write songs that made them happy.

"The More I Sleep, The Less I Dream" was one of the first songs to help shift the band in the right direction. It didn't take long to write with all members quickly connecting with its darker vibe. "All of the songs we scrapped were very calculated, whereas this song just flowed. It was instinctive. That gave us the confidence to believe that we could actually do this, just the four of us," Mike notes. "After that everything else just clicked."

"I'm glad we got that out of our system." Adam says. "A lot of the songs on the album are a reaction to that. We wouldn't have arrived at them without going the wrong way first."

From there, they focused on making sure each song was fully realized before even thinking about studios or recording. After meeting up regularly and writing constantly at their rehearsal space in Leith, Edinburgh for two years, the band made sure they knew all of their songs inside out. Every single detail of everyone's parts poured over, refined, built on. "We didn't want to fall back on studio tricks or extra

sounds,” Mike says. “If it wasn’t right in the room, then it wasn’t right. If a section needed to sound bigger we’d have to find a way to make it sound bigger live in the room. No excuses.”

The musicians connected with producer Jonathan Low (The National, Sufjan Stevens, Kurt Vile, The War on Drugs) and were inspired by his approach to their vision and his grounded style. After making their prior albums in England, Scotland and Iceland, it felt like a good opportunity to try crafting songs in the U.S. The album was recorded over the course of five weeks at Minor Street in Philadelphia and Long Pond in New York’s Hudson Valley in early 2018. The preparation turned out to be essential, helping the musicians keep each song simple and minimal. “Jon was totally onboard with us only adding things that underlined what we wrote together in the rehearsal space. We wanted it to sound like it was alive and he really helped us realize that” Adam says.

Lyrically, *The More I Sleep The Less I Dream* reflects a group of people who have grown up since they first emerged on the scene with *These Four Walls* in 2009. During the making of this album all four members turned 30, and felt like vastly different people to the four 20-year-olds that they were when they first started releasing music. Concepts of miscommunication and self-doubt thread throughout the songs, beginning with the surge of the album’s opening track “Impossible”, carrying through to the emotionally wrought, slow-burner “Hanging In”, and onwards to the relentless drive of “Repeating Patterns” and the menacing album closer “The More I Sleep, The Less I Dream.”

“The album is so much about us going back to our basics and relying on our instincts.” Mike says. “There’s a range of songs that span everything we do as a band, and we’re the connection between them. It feels like this album is us.”

The More I Sleep The Less I Dream marks a new chapter in We Were Promised Jetpacks’ career. It’s about going back to the heart of who they are, a high school band that never stopped. It’s about four people who have grown up together, making a conscious choice to keep writing music and seeing where that takes them.

Sometimes you must go back to basics in order to find yourself again. But once you have, then what? It’s one thing to say you want to take a step forward, it’s a much more daunting prospect actually doing so. *The More I Sleep The Less I Dream* contains the essence of what the band have grown into, both as artists and as people. They’ve taken their experiences, both from their ten years as a touring band and from the changes in their personal lives and forged them into an album that represents a new phase for the band.